

The Lion's Eye

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The intersection from hell

By MEREDITH BECKER
Copy Editor

Everyone on the Penn State Delco campus is familiar with the Route 352-Yearsley Mill Road intersection. Every day, students, faculty members and staff members alike must make the mad dash from road to the other.

Having to face the turn off of either road leads most drivers to pray for their lives.

"You just can't make the turn," said Brie Benson freshman IST major "I wait until everything is clear, which backs up the traffic behind me."

Penn State Delco security guard Dave Horevay says it's for good reason: There have been three recorded accidents since Fall 2000. Two ended with students being sent to the hospital.

Some students do everything in their power to avoid the intersection. Ryan Frampton, a junior IST major said, "I just take Yearsley down to Darlington to avoid 352 and the traffic."

But fear of the turn should be calmed in the next year or so, according to Lisa Yerges, Penn State Delco's director of business services, who says there seems to be some movement in the planning for the construction of a new and safer intersection.

Yerges says that the conceptual plan for the intersection has been sent to the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission. However, Middletown Township coordinator Bruce Clark says that the township has not approved any plans.

"I don't know what [Clark] is talking about, he typed the letter that went with the plan to the planning commission," Yerges said.

A plan to improve the safety of the intersection has been in the works since the school built the Classroom Building in 1998. Clark says that the township told the university then that, "If it plans on creating another building on this campus, it must first construct a new intersection for the safety of the students."

Plans for the new intersection have been changed time and time again. The first idea was to simply put up a traffic light at the end of Yearsley Mill Road. Then there was the idea of just adding a turn lane to 352. Both plans were debunked for one reason or another.

Now the plan is to cut into the existing front parking lot, across Route 352 and create a new third entrance onto Old Middletown Road. There will be a traffic light, so students can turn safely from and to Route 352. And there will also be a turn circle for the SEPTA buses to drop students off in the quad. (See diagram on right.)

Clark says that area residents all seem to be agreeable to the proposed construction. One is withholding his approval, but Clark doesn't think it will be a longterm problem.

Bottom line: There are two timelines for when to expect the intersection construction. According to Clark, nothing yet has been approved, and after the township gets a plan to approve, there will be a lot of "red tape" to cut through with PennDOT.

Clark said students "should not expect to see an intersection in the next few months ... even years."

But Yerges says, "Penn State will begin their end of the construction this spring." She also said that PennDOT construction would begin this summer.

Which leads to the inevitable question, "Who's wrong?"

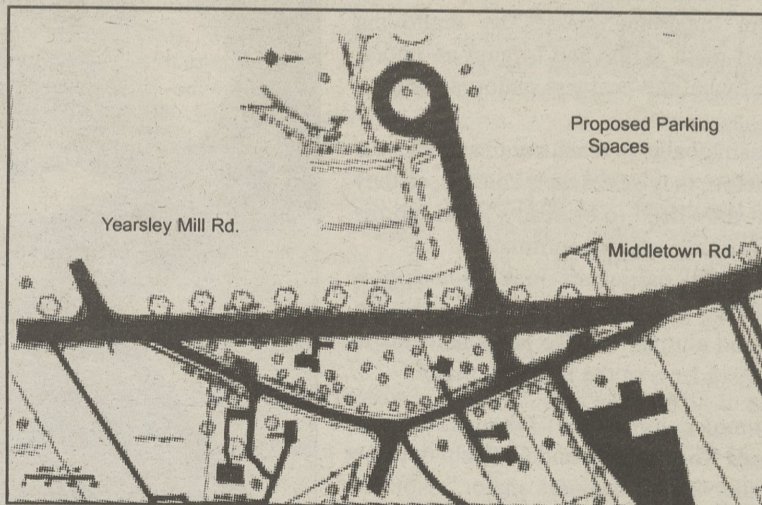
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Turn for the worst



Photo by Antea Consorto

A driver tries to make it from campus into the traffic flow on Route 352.



Token changes unwelcome for SEPTA riders

By SHAWN PETTIT
Assistant editor

Don't count Penn State Delco passengers among the people raving about the convenience of SEPTA, the Philadelphia area's public transit system. Many have already complained about the lack of convenience and courtesy by SEPTA and its drivers.

This August, SEPTA made major changes to its routes, dropping its express service on Route 110 and having Route 111 to stop at Penn State on its way to Chadds Ford.

Last year, there were two routes that went to Penn State Delco. Route 110 ran from the 69th Street Terminal in Upper Darby to Penn State via Granite Run Mall, and Route 117 started at the I-95 industrial park and stopped at Penn State Delco on

its way to West Chester.

Aside from its local service that went to Springfield Mall and through Media, Route 110 also had an express route that took the Route 1 Bypass, cutting travel time to Penn State from 69th Street by 20 minutes.

Now, Route 111 runs along State Road in Upper Darby, while Route 110 runs up Lansdowne Avenue to Route 1 south.

The change in scheduling and routes has inconvenienced students who live on that stretch of Route 1.

"I thought it would only take me half an hour to get to school," said freshman Brian Crawford, who commutes by SEPTA on Route 110. "Now it either takes almost an hour, or I have to pay more to catch a shorter route."

In addition to the route and schedule changes, some students have complained of the lack of courtesy by SEPTA drivers

who make their stop outside the Main Building.

For many of the drivers, Penn State is a rest stop, lasting 10 to 20 minutes. During

that time, many drivers leave their engines running, causing a distracting noise for students in class.

"The fumes from the buses come up into the biology labs and distract my class," said sophomore Jason Wark. "The constant noise is also a distraction."

Other students don't notice it as much. "The noise and fumes don't really bother me," said sophomore Jared Szymurski. "I like the fumes. They make class interesting."

SEPTA says it is making strides to improve its bus service. The new "Clean Air Bus" has just been unveiled and is expected to be the standard bus driven by SEPTA within the next few years.

Information on route scheduling, fares, and the new buses can be found online at <http://www.septa.org>.

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